

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: CABINET APPROVES ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE NOMINEES

SUMMARY: ON JULY 15 CABINET APPROVED AND SENT TO PARLIAMENT NAMES OF NOMINEES TO ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE (ACC). PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY-GENERAL RELATIVE UNKNOWN AS ARE MOST OF OTHER NOMINEES. NOMINATIONS ARE A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LIGHT OF SENI GOVERNMENT POLICY DECLARATION THAT FIGHTING CORRUPTION WILL BE ONE OF MAIN CONCERNS OF THIS GOVERNMENT. END OF SUMMARY.

1. THE CABINET ON JULY 15 APPROVED AND SENT TO THE PARLIAMENT NOMINATIONS FOR THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE (ACC). THE NOMINEES INCLUDE CHALOEM SATHIT-THONG, FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE CIVIL COURT AS PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE AND UTHAI SINTHUSAN, ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE UNDER THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT, AS SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COMMITTEE.

2. OTHER NOMINEES ARE: POLICE LTG MONCHAI PHANKONGCHUAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL POLICE; DR. PRIDI KASEMSAP, DEAN OF THAM-MASAT UNIVERSITY'S FACULTY OF LAW; DR. THAWAT MAKKARA-

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PHONG, FORMER GOVERNOR OF LAMPHUN AND PHANG-NGA PROV-

INCES; PRAYUN SIYANYONG, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL AUDIT COUNCIL; SAWAENG SIMASOEM, FORMER GOVERNOR OF NONTHABURI PROVINCE; PRATHUANG KIRATIBUT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT; AND DR. CHUMPHON SAWATDIYAKON, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL.

3. THE NAMING OF THE NOMINEES ENDED A THREE-MONTH SEARCH. SEVERAL PROMINENT THAIS, INCLUDING POL MG LUANG ATTHASIT SITTHISUNTHON, FORMER MINISTER OF INTERIOR IN THE SANYA AND THE 1975 SENI GOVERNMENTS DR. KASEM SUWANNAKUN, CHAIRMAN OF A SIMILAR COMMITTEE UNDER THE SANYA GOVERNMENTS; AND DR. UKRIT MONGKHONNAWIN, FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF A SIMILAR COMMITTEE UNDER THE SANYA GOVERNMENTS, REFUSED TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE.

4. NOMINEES TO THE COMMITTEE NAMED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT NEVER RECEIVED PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL BECAUSE OF AN OBJECTION TO THE NOMINATION OF SAWAT CHAIKHAUNA AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE. SAWAT, RECTOR OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WAS ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION SCANDALS.

5. COMMENT: NEITHER THE NOMINATED PRESIDENT NOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IS WELL-KNOWN OR HAS THE PUBLIC STATURE OF SOMEONE LIKE POL MG LUANG ATTHASIT. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DR. THAWAT AND POL. LTG MONCHAI ARE LITTLE-KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC. ALTHOUGH ALL ARE BELIEVED TO BE MEN OF HONESTY AND INTEGRITY, THE SELECTION OF CHALOEM AND UTHAI CAME AS A DISTINCT DISAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE THE SENI GOVERNMENT HAD MADE FIGHTING CORRUPTION ONE OF ITS MAJOR CONCERNS AND HAD INDICATED THAT IT WOULD MAKE THE ACC THE FOCUS OF THIS BATTLE. SEVERAL OF THOSE THAT TURNED DOWN NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE DID SO BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY BUT NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY TO MAKE MORE THAN A SMALL DENT IN THE CORRUPTION PROBLEM. THE EMBASSY WILL MONITOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACC.

6. BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES OF MR. CHALOEM AND MR. UTHAI FOLLOW IN SEPTTEL.
WHITEHOUSE

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